

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) In a method of making a filter media comprising a web of thermoplastic fibers, wherein said thermoplastic fibers are surface modified by treatment with a gaseous plasma at atmospheric pressure, the improvement wherein the gaseous plasma is consists essentially of air and at least one gas ~~consisting essentially selected from the group consisting of~~ He, Ar, Ne, N₂, Kr and combinations thereof.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the thermoplastic fibers are electrostatically charged.

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein the electrostatically charged thermoplastic fibers are electrostatically charged by a corona discharge method.

4. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said gaseous plasma is a He/air mixture.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein said gaseous plasma is a He/air mixture.

6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said gaseous plasma is a He/air mixture.

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said gaseous plasma is an Ar/air mixture.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein said gaseous plasma is an Ar/air mixture.

9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said gaseous plasma is an Ar/air mixture.

10. (Previously presented) The method to claim 1, wherein said thermoplastic fibers are made from one or more of the members selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, polycarbonates, polyimides, and polyamides.

11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein said thermoplastic fibers are made from one or more of the members selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, polycarbonates, polyimides, and polyamides.

12. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein said thermoplastic fibers are made from one or more of the members selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, polyesters, polycarbonates, polyimides, and polyamides.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the web is a fibrous layer of melt extruded fibers or filaments.

14. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein the web is a fibrous layer of melt extruded fibers or filaments.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the web is a fibrous layer of melt extruded fibers or filaments.

16-18. Canceled.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the web is comprised of carded, airlaid, or wetlaid staple fibers.

20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein the web is comprised of carded, airlaid, or wetlaid staple fibers.

21. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the web is comprised of carded, airlaid, or wetlaid staple fibers.

22. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the web is comprised of a layer of melt extruded fibers and a layer of any one or more of carded, airlaid, or wetlaid staple fibers.

23. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein the web is comprised of a layer of melt extruded fibers and a layer of any one or more of carded, airlaid, or wetlaid staple fibers.

24. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the web is comprised of a layer of melt extruded fibers and a layer of any one or more of carded, airlaid, or wetlaid staple fibers.

25-33. Canceled.